

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
January 13, 2015

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

INVOCATION: Reverend Christopher Perez – St. Andrews Anglican Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Mr. Widing was absent. All other members were present.

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, REMONSTRATIONS:

1. Election of Town Council Officers – Mr. Pettit made a motion to elect Tom Goralczyk as Town Council President for 2015. He was seconded by Mr. Hardaway. Mr. Pettit then motioned to close nominations for president and was seconded by Mr. Hardaway. The motion to elect Mr. Goralczyk as Town Council President was approved by a 6-0 roll call vote. Mr. Spann made a motion to elect Shawn Pettit as Town Council Vice President for 2015. Mr. Hardaway seconded the motion. Mr. Hardaway made a motion to close nominations for vice president and was seconded by Mr. Spann. The motion to elect Mr. Pettit as Town Council Vice President for the year 2015 was approved by a 6-0 roll call vote.
2. Mr. Guernsey performed the swearing in of the following Police Officers:
Sean P. Leto
Chad J. Stanek
Timothy J. Michels
Spencer L. DeBenedetti

Mr. Pettit made a motion to add Resolution 15-03 to the agenda and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of the Accounts Payable Register Voucher dated January 13, 2015.

Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes of December 23, 2014. Mrs. Barron made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mrs. Miano. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

BUDGET & FINANCE:

Mr. Goralczyk announced he was pleased with 2014. We ended on a positive note. We are finally seeing our heads above water.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Mr. Pettit reported snow removal has been good. We are getting two new trucks next week. Mr. Spires stated that one is paid through the Mississippi Street TIF and the other through the Merrillville Road TIF. Mr. Hardaway reminded residents of the parking restrictions when there is a two inch snowfall. The Council asked the press to include a parking restriction reminder in the newspaper.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS:

Mr. Spann shared information from the literature provided by Brian Dering about nightclub related violence. He feels we need to go one step further, as some towns have, and create a commission that reviews the nightclubs. Perhaps add language to the ordinance that when they get their permit, the business shows the commission how they are going to secure the interior and exterior of their premises. Mr. Bushemi felt that this would be an extra component to the suggestions that Mr. Dering has submitted to the Town Council regarding the proposed new nightclub regulatory ordinance.

PERSONNEL POLICY & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

Mr. Pettit, as a member of the personnel policy and employee benefits committee, made a motion to hire Jan Orlich as the new Parks & Recreation Director at a salary of \$53,000, with full benefits and use of a car for business related travel. There is a 90 day probationary period in accordance with the Personnel Policy. Mrs. Barron seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried in a 6-0 roll call vote. The new Park Director, Jan Orlich, was introduced to the Council.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Mr. Widing was absent. No update was reported.

PARKS & RECREATION:

Items to be approved for Parks Master Plan:

Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the request for eligibility to participate in the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Hardaway made a motion to approve the assurance of compliance with Title VI and was seconded by Mrs. Miano. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Hardaway made a motion to approve the assurance of handicap accessibility compliance and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Arshami congratulated the Council for quick action on one of the recommendations in the plan, hiring a Park Director. He also thanked the Town Manager for all the help he received from him during the preparation of the plan. This plan is in place for the next five years.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS:

Mr. Goralczyk deferred to Matt Lake. Mr. Lake told the Council we are moving forward on the hydraulic analysis of Ross Meadow Farms through a contract with Christopher Burke Engineering. We will use that data to formulate a plan for the drainage plans. After the analysis is completed we will meet with the residents around there to let them know the options. We will stick with the aquatic weed control to treat Bon Aire Lake for algae and with Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District to conduct public education within the local school system. We had an issue, as Tom mentioned, over on Taney Place. We believe it's a water main or water line break. We haven't figured out the source yet, but we are protecting a home there because of the icy conditions. We had to sandbag and added salt to melt down an area where the water runs. Mr. Goralczyk added that Indiana Water has been out there, and Utilities, Inc. has been out there. IHCD has been out there. Everybody has been working together to determine what's going on out there.

Mr. Hardaway noted that on December 12th, the East 54th Court rain project received another award. This one came from the Crossroads Chamber. It's for landscape and architectural excellence in design. Mr. Lake and his group are to be commended for this work and all the work they continue to do regarding stormwater within the town that continues to make us the model that everybody else wants to copy.

ELECTIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Mrs. Miano announced AARP, through Merrillville Senior Services, will begin tax preparation at the Merrillville Town Hall on February 3rd. Appointments will be available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Appointments can be scheduled by calling the Clerk-Treasurer's office at (219) 769-3501.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Mr. Goralczyk had no report.

UTILITY LIAISON:

Mrs. Barron announced we now have enough caps for two benches and encourages all the residents of Merrillville and all contributors to continue because there are other programs we can use the caps on in the future.

TOWN GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANIZATION:

Mrs. Miano had no report.

ADA COMPLIANCES:

Mrs. Miano had no report.

ABANDONED PROPERTIES:

Mr. Hardaway informed the Council that the next meeting of the committee is scheduled for next Wednesday, January 21st at 10:00 a.m.

GENERAL ORDERS:

FIRST READING ORDINANCES:

Ord. 15-01: An Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, amending Ordinance 14-37 which amended the existing Park Impact Fee ordinance by adjusting the amount of the fees. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mr. Hardaway. Mr. Bushemi stated this is simply a change in the effective date of Ordinance 14-37, which was originally set for June 1, 2015, but we needed to allow six months after the approval, so this ordinance changes the effective date to be June 23, 2015. He asked to suspend the rules on the second reading and allow the second reading at today's meeting. The motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote.

Mr. Pettit made a motion to suspend the rule on second reading and allow for it to take place at today's meeting. Mr. Hardaway seconded the motion. The motion was carried 6-0 by a roll call vote.

Ord. 15-02: An Ordinance vacating a water utility easement in the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana

Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mrs. Miano. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote.

Mr. Pettit made a motion to suspend the rule on the second reading and allow for it to take place at today's meeting.

Mrs. Miano seconded the motion to suspend the rules. The motion to suspend the rule for second reading was carried by a unanimous voice vote.

SECOND READING ORDINANCES:

Ord. 15-01: An Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana, amending Ordinance 14-37 which amended the existing Park Impact Fee ordinance by adjusting the amount of the fees. There was no public comment. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mrs. Barron. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote.

Ord. 15-02: An Ordinance vacating a water utility easement in the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana

Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the ordinance and was seconded by Mrs. Miano. There was no public comment. There was no discussion. The motion carried by a 6-0 roll call vote.

RESOLUTIONS:

Res. 15-01: A resolution of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana authorizing temporary loans to fulfill monetary requirements necessary for debt service payments. (retroactive to 1-12-15) Mrs. Miano made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mr. Pettit. There was no discussion. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Res. 15-02: A resolution of the Park Authority of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana for the 2015-2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Mrs. Miano made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Mr. Spann. There was no discussion. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Res. 15-03: A resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana approving the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between several Lake County governmental entities with the purpose of providing resources to support the extension and improvement of commuter rail transportation services provided by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District. Mr. Goralczyk deferred signing of the resolution to Vice President, Shawn Pettit, due to a conflict of interest, as NICTD is Mr. Goralczyk's employer. Mr. Goralczyk stated he is neither for or against the resolution; however, due to his conflict of interest, he will not participate in the vote. Mr. Hardaway made a motion to approve the resolution and was seconded by Mr. Pettit. The motion passed by a roll call vote 5-1, with 1 abstention.

BZA ACTIONS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for the support of the extension and improvement of commuter rail services

NEW BUSINESS:

Clerk-Treasurer, Eugene Guernsey, presented to the Council, for their action, a statement pursuant to the requirements of the State Board of Accounts. This is a statement regarding uncollectible EMS bills which total \$1,678,421.43 as of calendar year-end 2013. Based on Town Ordinance 04-23, the Town Council is required at the conclusion of each audit year to approve the write-off of these uncollectible debts. Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve the write-off of uncollectible EMS debts that remained at the end of 2013 in the sum of \$1,678,421.43. Mr. Hardaway seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed by a 6-0 roll call vote.

Mr. Guernsey also read a letter he wrote to The Times editor, Bob Heisse, in response to comments made regarding the Merrillville Town Council by columnist Rich James in his column Sunday, December 28, 2014.

Mr. Goralczyk announced the Town Council Committees for 2015. Mr. Pettit made a motion to appoint Pete Guip to the Police Commission and was seconded by Mrs. Miano. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote. All appointments are listed on a separate sheet attached below.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

All public comment is recorded on cassette tape and kept on file in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office at Town Hall.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Environmental Resource Committee meeting, January 15, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.

Town Hall closed January 19, 2015 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Plan Commission meeting, January 20, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Abandoned Blighted Properties Committee meeting, January 21, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

Town Council meeting , January 27, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Pettit and seconded by Mr. Hardaway.

Tom Goralczyk, President

Eugene Guernsey, Clerk-Treasurer

2015 - MERRILLVILLE TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEES:

BUDGET & FINANCE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Pettit, Chairman
Hardaway
Miano

PUBLIC WORKS
(Bldg. & Grounds,
Town Beautification)

Spann, Chairman
Hardaway
Pettit

COUNCIL AFFAIRS (Ordinances)

Miano, Chairman
Hardaway
Widing

**PERSONNEL POLICY &
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Pettit, Chairman
Hardaway
Spann

PUBLIC SAFETY
(Police & Fire Services)

Widing, Chairman
Miano
Pettit

PARKS & RECREATION

Miano, Chairman
Spann
Widing

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
(Includes Development & Maintenance
of Retention Ponds Committee)

Goralczyk, Chairman
Spann
Widing

ELECTIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS
(3TC, CT & TM & PK Sup. & also
includes Town Parade Committee)

Miano, Chairwoman
Guernsey
Orlich
Spann
Spires
Widing

***SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(3TC, CRC Exec. Dir., CRC Econ. Dev. Chairman)

Pettit, Chairman
Barron
Spann
Skip Bosak, Chamber Pres.
Sue Reed, Exe. Dir., MCC

UTILITY LIAISONS

Barron, Chairwoman
Spann
Widing

ABANDONED BLIGHTED PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

Hardaway, Chairman
Spann
Guernsey

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE

Tom Goralczyk

**NORTHWEST INDIANA REGIONAL
PLAN COMMISSION**

Richard Hardaway

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Barron
Hardaway
Miano
Pettit
Spann

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Minchuk
Olthof
Ward

PLAN COMMISSION

Bigelow
Dering
Hardaway
Holtz
Palmateer
Pettit
Widing

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS COMMITTEE

Bigelow
Fortier
Holtz
Minchuk
Stojakovich

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Ghoston
Simek
White

POLICE COMMISSION

Guip
Kennedy
Ward

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**Gregor
Guernsey
Miano
Petruch
Pettit
Sum
Vorkapich**

FIRE TERRITORY BOARD

**Goralczyk
Widing**